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NOTES AND NEWS

With our American traditions of separate church and state, it is a somewhat novel experience to read the fiery arguments now being published in England against a proposed secularization of the schools. The *Fortnightly Review* (for May) contains such a discussion. Statistics are given to prove the increase in juvenile criminality in countries where religion is not taught in the school; France and the United States are prominent examples. The article gives an extended comparison between Victoria and New South Wales, "the leading states of Australasia and approximately equal in climatic conditions." Victoria has secular education; in it the increase of crime has outstripped the growth of population 6 per cent. in the last four years. New South Wales has religious instruction and although it began as a penal colony, and twenty years ago had nearly twice as many crimes as Victoria,

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it is now the better colony of the two, as shown by the most recent statistics. All these facts must make us pause before assuming that America has solved forever the questions of education over which England is struggling.

New York is to undertake the education of the blind in her regular public schools, as determined early last summer. Classes are to be established in certain centrally located schools, each to be made up of about a dozen blind children and four or five who can see. The same subjects are to be taught as are taught normal children. This plan involves the printing of the present textbooks in raised letters.

Professor H. K. Wolfe, of the University of Nebraska offers free instruction in the philosophy of education to the teachers of that state. The prescribed reading for the course includes among other literature the *School Review*.

Commissioner Brown is endeavoring to bring out the *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education* at a considerably earlier date than has been usual. Vol. I went to the printer October 1, six months earlier than any

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NOTES AND NEWS

previous report, and Vol. II it is hoped may go December 31. Certainly all school officers should co-operate to make this possible.

The Commissioner of Education is also seeking the co-operation of city superintendents in securing greater uniformity in city statistics. A form has been submitted as a basis for criticism, and it is hoped that standards may be worked out which will make intelligent and fair comparison of different cities possible.

One of the most interesting of the newer experiments is the Smith's Agricultural School and Northampton Institute of Technology which has opened this autumn. The following is taken from the *Springfield Republican*:

The school will provide training in agriculture, with a view to practicable and profitable farming; in household economy, with a view to efficient and enjoyable housekeeping and home-making, and in mechanic arts, as either a foundation for desirable apprenticeships in the cases of boys who enter at fourteen years, or as preparation for the work of journeymen or foremen in the cases of students more mature. A subordinate aim will be to prepare pupils who

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THE SCHOOL REVIEW

desire to go on to higher institutions devoted to agriculture or household arts, or to secure training at one of the state normal schools for teaching nature subjects. In all of the courses training for good citizenship and high character will receive attention.

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Courses are now offered for three years, as follows: First year—Soils and plant life, physical geography, elementary science, practical arithmetic, book-keeping, free-hand drawing, English, algebra, American history and civil government, mechanical work. Second year—Botany, farm chemistry, animal husbandry, farm physics, plane geometry, English, general history, mechanical work. Third year—Rural economics, fruit-growing, market-gardening, floriculture, landscape-gardening, forestry, insect life, bird life, bees, plant diseases, spraying, bacteriology of soils, fertilizers, drainage and irrigation, greenhouses and hotbeds, weather and climate, physiology and hygiene, English, use of building-materials.

In the *Psychological Clinic* for October 15, Leonard P. Ayres, who is in charge of the backward-children investigation to be conducted by the Sage Foundation, makes a preliminary analysis of the factors responsible for the falling-off of attendance in successive grades. He shows the differences due respectively to death, to increase in population, to retardation, and to dropping out as pupils reach an age (thirteen, fourteen, fifteen) at which a large proportion will leave, no matter in what grade they may be. When these factors as determined by statistical methods are combined, they give very nearly the distribution actually found in typical cities.

In connection with a series of articles in the *New York Evening Post* on "How to Give Wisely," Duane Mowry, of the Milwaukee Board of School Directors, calls attention to needs of the schools, such as libraries, community free reading-rooms, popular lecture courses, decoration of school buildings and grounds, encouragement to teachers to grow intellectually by provisions for advance in salaries and larger place in the community as part of the social make-up.

To my mind, the common schools of the country, the great public-school system of the United States, offer the only complete opportunity for such a distribution of wealth. Here is a large and unworked field for human endeavor in a hundred different ways, and in as many localities, and where the conditions requiring the expenditure of wealth in the interest of good citizenship imperatively demand it.

W. H. Winch, in the *British Journal of Psychology*, in tests for transfer of improvement in memory of school children, found that children who received training in memorizing poetry made greater improvement in ability to memorize history (by rote) than children who were given training in doing sums.